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Postcards urge DA to prosecute CIA protesters

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Boulder District Attorney Alex Hunter has been barraged with some 6,000 postcards from across the country since he refused to prosecute demonstrators against CIA recruiters at the University of Colorado last spring.

But the mass mailing has not convinced him to change his strategy for dealing with political demonstrators, he said Friday.

A similar campus demonstration is anticipated Nov. 18, when CIA recruiters are again scheduled to be on campus.

Hundreds of the postcards poured into Hunter's office every day during the summer, and the district attorney's office still receives several cards each day, urging "swift and sure prosecution."

The mailing was instigated by a group calling itself Young Americans For Freedom, which sent out a letter urging people to sign and mail the enclosed postcard to Hunter.

The letter chided the district attorney for failing to prosecute the 478 people arrested during three days of non-violent protests while the CIA recruited at the University in April.

The letter warned of a "radical campus network being mobilized like never before to disrupt our colleges and cities."

The letter lists a Washington D.C. address, but there is no telephone number in the Washington directory for Young Americans for Freedom.

Hunter said only a few of the postcards came from Boulder, and he had received no personal complaints from Boulder County residents about his handling of the protesters.

"The people in Tennessee and Florida have expressed to me how I should bring the whole weight of the justice system down on these violators," he said. "But I've not had one personal letter or phone call from a Boulder citizen ... It reflects the attitude of the Boulder public, whether liberal or conservative, that they see this kind of thing as a healthy protest."

Ironically, the people in Boulder who challenged Hunter's handling of the April protests were the protesters themselves, who wanted their day in court to make their case against the CIA and were upset when their cases were dismissed.

Hunter said he felt his handling of the protests last time was appropriate and he would use the same strategy unless an individual's conduct merits more serious legal action.

"Whether an arrest results in further prosecution depends on the facts. We felt the last time it didn't warrant prosecution ... There were more important cases that we needed to spend the taxpayers' money on."

The demonstration next month is planned by Community in Action, a coalition of activist groups in Boulder that charges the CIA recruiters are guilty of conspiring to commit heinous crimes in Central America, charges that the CIA denies.

Kevin Harris, a Community in Action student leader, said Friday he still doesn't know how many protesters will turn out. He noted that last time, the group had only 15 people sign up to attempt a citizen's arrest of the CIA recruiters, and hundreds turned out. He expects at least the number that turned out last spring.

CU police, school officials and representatives of the Boulder police, sheriff's and district attorney's offices met Thursday to plan their strategy for dealing with the demonstrators. Assistant District Attorney Bill Wise said they discussed various contingencies, manpower, facilities to handle the potentially large number of people that might be arrested.

CU Police Lt. Dave Stoltz said his office anticipates no violence during the demonstration, but has prepared for the possibility. He said last time police were able to work well with the demonstrators, and he saw the arrests as "symbolic" on their part.

He said police anticipate no violence but they have to be prepared for the possibility